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1800

"Too Thin"

OR

Skeleton Sara.

PUBLISHED BY
EVANS & KELLY, 17 & 19 Rose St.

Price—10 Cents.

"TOO THIN;"

—OR—

SKELETON SARA.

HER "REALISTIC" LIFE

—AND—

ADVENTURES IN AMERICA.

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BY
ISAAC G. REED, Jr.,
Author of "Ye Russian Ball," "The Prince's Visit," "Erring Yet Noble," etc.

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PREFACE.

ROOM—329—HOTEL de SMITH & McNEILL,
(European Plan), Opposite Washington Market,
New York, October, 1880.

Official-extra—"extra dry."

TO THE AUTHOR AND PUBLISHERS OF "TOO THIN; or SKELETON SARA:"

Messieurs:

By ze aid of Webster's Unabridged I have read ze proof-sheets of votre book. It is ze only life of me which, to use ze words of my loving friend, ze great Henry Ward Tilton, or Theodore Beecher, of ze Brooklyn Bridge, or ze Plymouth Rock (I am getting a "leetle mixed"—not in my drinks, but in my dialect—but you comprenez what I mean,) shows ze "true inwardness" of my life, and does justice to ze great motif of my career—ze spilling of as much printers ink as possible over myself—I think "Too Thin" perfectly charmant, and I would like to (viskey) punch its author's head. Ze Melican man very funny. Please do not forget to send me one copy of ze very first edition. I will send you ze ten cents as soon as I make another, what you call, "raid" on my New York manager. At ze present, what with my dear leetle poodles, my lazy maids, my fatherless children, and my good for nothing agents, I am as you would say, "dead-broke." But I kiss votre hands—or will kiss zem when I see you—and will remain, yours truly, as long as there is skin on the bones of

SARA.

"TOO THIN,"

OR

SKELETON SARA.

SARA AS A CHILD.

Sara was born—and born in the usual way. These two most plebian facts have never been denied, we believe, up to date, even by Sara herself. True, a story has been started that, like Topsy, she "had never been born, but growed"—that her mother had been an electric light and her father the tail of a comet. But this canard, proving like herself, "too thin," it was prudently withdrawn from circulation and vehemently denied most of all by Sara, who merely hinted that some disguised mysterious Duc or Marquis was "the author of her being." Whereas in reality her father and her mother belonged to what she would now herself designate as the "canaille" or common people.

But though ordinary in her birth and parentage she was "queer" in every other particular. She was an "odd" baby. Never did what was done by other babies. Never kicked, squirmed, squalled, or sucked her fingers—not from any desire to be better or more obliging than other babies, but simply from an innate desire and determination to be *different*. As a little girl she did just the opposite of other little girls—wore her cheapest, dirtiest dresses on a Sunday or fete day, her very best frock in the very worst weather, and never said her prayers at all. As for her dolls, she made herself the talk of all the children in the neighborhood by breaking their heads and limbs, and as a prize fighter would say, "knockin' the stuffin' out of 'em," not from any ill-will toward the dolls, but simply and solely because she saw that all "the common children" loved their dolls and petted them.

For the same reason, too, as all other children liked molasses syrups she pretended to dislike them, and took a violent fancy to swallowing vinegar—a whim which she indulged to such an extent as to lay the foundation of what is to-day one of her strongest, thickest points, viz., her "thinness."

When thirteen years old she "ran away" from her parents, in company with another girl. Her companion "ran away" in earnest, but Sara only "made believe," left word behind her as to her whereabouts, was caught, brought back, and was more talked about than ever. Her folks then sent her to a House of Refuge, where she received the rudiments of a thoroughly "practical education.

SARA AS A DRESSMAKER.

Reaching maturity Sara tried her hand at dressmaking; but to tell the truth she was a very poor modiste, and for a while she had nobody to try her dresses on but herself, and the result was not encouraging. But one day she commenced to advertise—and from that time, although her dresses were no better, her customers were. This gave her her first "point" or "kink" on advertising.

Then she began to feel that she would prefer being a dressmaker's model or puppet—on the stage—to being a mere dressmaker off of it; that she would rather be an actress than a modiste; and naturally enough the idea suggested itself that printer's ink might avail her even more on the stage than in the store.

SARA AS AN ACTRESS.

"I think I am talented," reasoned Sara, "I *know* I am odd; my oddities are of no earthly use to me as a dressmaker, but I I can make them invaluable to me as an actress. I am a woman, too; not much of a one, it is true, merely the skin and bones of one, but still, not a man. I can turn my oddities and my sex into advertisements and newspaper paragraphs. These are certainties and I can take my chances on my talents; I shall carry advertising to its highest or lowest point; I shall make an advertising

dodge of myself—an incarnate advertisement—or a skeleton of one"—and she kept her word.

She became an actress—and her whole stage drilling lay in being talked about. She gave one day to Art and the rest of the week to Advertisement.

SARA IN HER STUDIO.

She hired a studio and announced that she was a sculptor. This gave her a double claim upon the notice of the press. Her notoriety as an actress would lead the public to see her in the studio—her notoriety as a sculptor would send the public to see her on the stage. It was a double-barreled advertisement.

She bought for a mere song a few old works of art that had been lying around the junk shops of Paris; then she hired a Bohemian artist, for a limited salary and unlimited beer to re-touch these works, and also engaged him to model a few casts himself. This arrangement worked admirably, and gave her no end of gush and notoriety, till one day Sara, who had a temper of her own, became enraged at the poor devil of an artist because he had partaken of more beer than usual, and terminated an interview with him by throwing one of her (his) or his (her) choicest works of art at his head, and then trying to brain the poor Bohemian with his own mallet.

SARA IN HER PAINT SHOP.

Having thus abandoned sculpture, or rather her sculptor having thus abandoned her, Sarah cultivated the kindred art of painting. She did not hire an artist, however—she really became a colorist herself. With time and care she might have progressed so far as to earn days wages as a "house or sign painter," but considered in a critical light she was not a success. Her picture of a horse drinking at a stream possessed the merit of a mysterious and "suggestive" obscurity; the horse might have been an elephant or a lion, and the water might have been dry land—but regarded as a work of art it was more, much more, "work" than "art," and Sara wisely determined to abandon painting—save in one line—self-decoration. "At least I can

paint myself," she said—and she has kept on painting herself till this day.

SARA IN HER COFFIN.

Finding in the course of time that clay and canvas were losing their hold upon the public, Sara prudently resolved to attempt something new and startling. Passing an undertakers' shop one afternoon the bold and original idea occurred to her that a coffin might be utilized as an advertisement. She forthwith stepped into the shop and bought a coffin.

Then, by an arrangement with the undertaker, she was wrapped in her shroud (what there was of her to wrap), candles and lights were disposed around the casket, and "her friends and relatives were respectfully invited to attend the funeral"—or at least to view Sara in her shroud—more shroud than Sara.

This coffin advertisement proved, as it deserved to be, a "dead" failure. Sara had never been lovely as a creature—as a corpse she was hideous. The sight of her gave a leading journalist a fit of dyspepsia, for which he never forgave her. In fact, the dead Sara was so horrible that her visitors rushed pell-mell from her—and the living Sara was obliged finally to get out of her casket by herself and carry away her own coffin.

SARA AND THE CRITIC.

These repeated rebuffs in her pursuit of notoriety "soured" Sara, and she looked around her for a victim on whom to vent her wrath. At last she found one.

There was a little critic who attacked Sara in the journal to which he was attached. Among other things he said that "her hair and teeth were false." One day the little critic was seated in his sanctum, with his "copy" and his "absinthe," when in rushed Sara. Without a word, but with a scowl containing the concentrated malice of ten thousand old maids, she commenced to obscure his vision by throwing at him, one after another, a choice assortment of blonde wigs with *real* human hair, crying out, as each wig hit him in the eye, "Do you call that false?" Then when she had nearty blinded him, she relieved the monotony by

hurling at him with all her might (and Sara, though not muscular, is bony, and bones are vigorous) one after another, sets of teeth of genuine ivory and celluloid, shouting, as each set hit him in the jaw, or elsewhere, "Do you call that false?"

The little critic was vanquished and "threw up the sponge." Glad to escape more serious consequences he "took it all back" in his next article on Sara, and now whenever he shows the slightest inclination to criticise her "on her merits" (a species of criticism which Sara most cordially detests) she simply sends him, per special messenger, a package containing a wig and a set of teeth as a warning, and the little critic sees, shudders, and subsides.

SARA AND THE PRINCE.

"Sara's most ingenions advertisement was her last. It was really clever—being thoroughly womanly.

A Prince—not, it is true, of the blood royal, only a German Prince of the sixteenth degree—fell in love with Sara—that is to say, not with *her* (that was impossible) but with her *notoriety*, which was very natural.

Sara accepted his advances, and made an appointment to meet him in a secluded portion of a public garden. Then she sent a mysterious note, without a signature, notifying Madame la Princesse, the Prince's wife, that her husband had arranged a rendezvous with the notorious Sara, stating time and place.

Of course the Prince was punctual to the appointment. So was Sara—and so was Madame la Princesse. At the proper moment, just as the Prince became tender, the Princesse became furious, and rushing upon the scene from behind the tree where she had been hiding, attacked her faithless spouse in a fit of jealous agony, with her parachute, while Sara rushed through the crowd which had gathered around this highly edifying and refreshing spectacle, muttering delightedly. "*She* has broken her heart—and her parasol—but *I* am advertised.

SARA AND THE MANAGERS.

She was indeed, quite as well advertised as Lea & Perrin's

Worscestershire Sauce, Warr[illegible]'s [illegible], Horsford's Bucku, or Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup. And to increase her eclat she now commenced to make herself intensely disagreeable to all other actresses and actors, and to quarrel with her managers. This brought her into additional notoriety—and law suits. The law suits were telegraphed across the Atlantic, and of course the American managers became wildly anxious to engage a woman who could afford to advertise herself by defying her manager. Theatrical managers, like certain fish, thrive best in hot weather—and the metaphorical waters around Skeleton Sara were always scalding hot.

Finally, after months of negotiation, having changed her mind say some three hundred times—and raised her price say some three hundred and fifty—having kept eight lawyers and eighteen agents constantly busy—having whitened the hairs and completely shattered the nervous systems of all parties concerned in the transaction—she signed a contract with a New York manager, who from that moment was regarded by his fellow managers with equal envy and pity—envy at his chances of success, and pity for his certainties of trouble.

And at last, having been "interviewed" with and "corresponded about, having been cartooned and cabled, having been published and photographed, having been "done up" in poems and paragraphs, having made any number of demands for advances and additional salary, she left Europe, attended by a suite of poodle dogs and reporters—several children, who, although they were not yet wise enough to know their own father, at least were aware that Sara was their mother—one thousand dresses, and one skeleton (besides herself.)

SARA "HALF SEAS OVER."

During the voyage across the Atlantic Sara devoted herself in about equal proportions to deep thought—in which respect she differed from the majority of her fellow prssengers) and a deep basin (in which respect she exactly resembled her fellow passengers—all of whom were compelled to have a basin, more or less deep, beside them constantly. Sara's basin was just a little deeper than the rest—just as her thoughts were.

The subject of her reflections during her trip were naturally enough on America, and how she could best advertise herself in that great country.

The result of her reflections was about as follows:

"As America is the youngest of the nations, of course, like all youngsters it likes *noise*. Well, then, noise it shall have—blare and brag and bray—I will give it no peace, day or night, but shall blow my horn, or have it blown, as long as there is brass or wind remaining. And as all youngsters are passionately fond of anything "out of the way,' uncommon, I will be uncommon" from the start—as "out of the way" as I possibly can be without being "out of my head" altogether. To make them think me *divine* I shall pretend to be crazy—I shall advertise myself as a *genius* by behaving like a *lunatie*. "Nuff Ced."

And she returned to her basin.

SARA'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS" IN AMERICA.

As the steamer came nearer and nearer the dock it was noticed that Sara became more and more thoughtful—she was evidently resolving upon some grand *coup d' theatre*—some sensational style of entering America. She was a believer in 'first impressions," and was making up her mind to produce an impression of the most decided character from the very beginning. For a while she paced the deck to and fro (without the basin) and scratched her head, or wig, in dire perplexity. At last she smiled a smile of triumph. She had solved the problem. She had hit upon the very thing she wanted—a style of entering the great Republic which would convulse it to its centre—a style of entering the great Republic which assuredly no woman had ever as much as dreamed about before." All r-ight," said Sara. It was about all the English, or American, she knew.

The steamer "slowed up" majestically to the dock. Here Sara's American manager had arranged that a claque of about one hundred "artists," supers and 'longshoremen were standing all ready to applaud her wildly as she first put foot on America. But alas, the claque were not afforded an opportunity to

get their "fine work" in—for Sara never put foot on America at all.

No, she had thought out a trick worth a hundred of that. Uttering an exclamation—in French, English, or native Dutch—waving her bony arms, like umbrella handles, wildly above her, she gave a leap from the steamers' side, and fell as she intended, *on her head.* Up went her skirts, round went her legs, the women cried "shame," though there was nothing to be ashamed of—the men looked, but saw nothing—(or Sara's ankles—the same thing). The claque stood stupified, not knowing exactly what was expected of them under the circumstances, while two small boys rushed across the street, one of them yelling "perlice!" and the other bawling out "fire!"

And this was Skeleton Sara's "first appearance in America."

SARA MEETS HER AMERICAN MANAGER.

Having created the sensation she desired, on her head, she resumed the normal position of woman by standing on her feet and looking around her. She saw a crowd of astonished women, amused men, and grinning boys. She also saw her American manager, gazing at her in wonder mingled with awe, as if she were a two-tailed baboon, or a three-headed giraffe. At his side stood a lady, leaning on his arm, and staring at Sara with all her eyes. Not heeding the lady, Sara (determined to pursue her plan of doing everything differently from other people) instead of extending her hand to her manager and grasping his outstretched palm, as is the usual style of salutation, rushed to him and kissed him, if not lovingly at least loudly, on each cheek, terminating her welcome by encircling him with her arms, that is, enveloping him within the circumference of a certain number of flesh-covered bones. The manager, not being prepared for this sensational greeting, submitted in silence, but the lady accompanying him was neither submissive nor silent—being his wife.

Violently separating Sara's umbrella-handles from the manager's neck, the lady drew the gentleman away, saying to Sara, as she did so :

"That man, that gentleman, is my spouse—my husband, madam. Do you understand, madam—my husband. We *have* such things as *husbands* in this country."

A piece of information especially designed for Sara's benefit.

The crowd, expecting to witness a "scene," between the two women, and delighting to behold it, pressed around closely. But the manager, succeeded in pacifying the pair, and outward harmony at least was restored.

Sara was escorted to her carriage, the bright Broadway was reached, and Skeleton Sara was fairly in New York at last.

WHAT SARA HAD FORGOTTEN.

As the carriage passed the New York Hotel a characteristic incident occurred. Sara's pet maid, who carried her pet poodle, suddenly clasped her hands and exclaimed, "Mon Dieu! Madam has forgotten something!" Sara was startled, looked round her, shook her head, and said simply "Non," her maid was mistaken. But the maid persisted she was *not* mistaken. Madame had forgotten something. "Ma foi, what can it be zat I have forgotten," said Sara to her maid. I have all my dresses, have I not?"

"Oui, madame," answered the maid.

"And all my dogs?"

"Oui, madame."

"And all my reporters?"

"Oui, madame."

"Then what on earth can I have forgotten?" asked Sara in bewilderment.

"Ah, madame's head is so full of ze great things," said the maid, "zat she cannot remember ze trifles." Ah, madame has forgotten her four little children."

"Ah, true, true!" said Sara, recovering her equanamity, "I thought I had forgotten something of importance, which I could not replace. Oui, oui, I have forgotten my little darlings; but they are safe on board the steamer somewhere; we need not turn back for them now; I will send for them by express when I have reached my hotel, ze very first thing."

THE FIRST THING SARA DID.

But she did *not* send for her darlings, as she promised, as as she arrived; on the contrary, she never so much as thoug them again till after dinner. Her first thought was "grub," first movement was in the direction of the dining room. T "thin" people always eat in inverse ratio to their thinness most attenuated having the most appetite—and thus it was Sara.

But aware that her first bill of fare in this free country w be reported by telegraph from Maine to California—ha already caught a glimpse of several seedy-looking arrivals note-books, whom her instinct told her were reporters, prep to watch and record her every mouthful, she ordered not onl extensive, but an eccentric menu, requiring the combined ta and digestions of a jackass and an anaconda.

Having finished her repast, and completely cleared the ta leaving the reporters to discuss where on earth the good thi had all gone to, as they evidently hadn't gone to skin and bo as Sara was as like a "skeleton" as ever, and the illustri stranger retired to her suite of rooms (we beg pardon, ap ments) which had been "engaged" for her—(we again beg p don, we mean "specially appropriated for her use.")

SARA AT HER HOTEL.

Sara's arrival caused a great commotion. The hotel w thronged with men, women and children, anxious to catch a glimpse of the great genius, or as one of the Irish porters called her, "the crazy actress." But their curiosity was not gratified Sara was too smart and too stingy to exhibit herself for nothing. She was not that kind of a hairpin. She kept herself exclusive and remained in her rooms, which were made as dark as possible during the day, and as brilliantly-lighted as possible during the night, simply to reverse the usual arrangement. The chamber-maids and bell-boys were driven to distraction, so that by venting their complaints in the halls they might in their humble way help still further to advertise Sara.

She employed one person exclusively to translate for her

into French every word that was published about in the New York papers, and she employed another poor devil to write articles and paragraphs about her *for* the New York papers—and this pair of unfortunates were worked like galley slaves, eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, till they gladly committed suicide together. She gave strict orders to admit into her presence at once every man who might be connected with a newspaper. She was interviewed by reporters in bed, or while dressing or undressing. She insulted a whole room full of distinguished visitors, and dismissed them pell-mell in order to entertain one of the "greasiest" dramatic critics, whom she "oiled" before leaving. She entertained Bohemians long after midnight—in brief, to use a most expressive colloqum, " She made Rome howl," and her hotel-keeper wish that he or she had never been born.

SARA AND HER SKELETON.

One night, passing through the corridor and seeing a bright light peering through crevices of the apartment—**329**— occupied by the eccentric artiste, a chambermaid stopped at the door, and peeped in through the keyhole. She gazed a momcnt and then rushed wildly through the corridor, calling with the full strength of her vigorous lungs—" Murder !"—" Police !"—" Murder "—"Police!" Alarmed by such fearful sounds at midnight, the guests of the hotel stood in their night-robes at their respective doors, demanding alike protection and explanation. But the chambermaid rushed on, shouting louder than ever, " Murder !" Police!" A woman has murdered a man in her room, and is playing with his bones!" a statement well calculated to chill the blood of the boldest.

An investigation ensued, and it was ascertained that, as was her wont, that Sara had been rehearsing " Frou-Frou" with her pet skeleton—the skeleton of a man who had killed himself for love, which ghastly relic of mortality Sara has been for years in the habit of carrying with her everywhere—and rehearsing with it in the solitude.

SARA AT REHEARSAL.

Meanwhile rehearsals were held daily at the Theatre—rehearsals which, as one of the stage-hands phrased it, were "both infernal and eternal." Sara was always late at rehearsal, and always cross—finding fault incessantly with others, but never permitting the slightest fault to be found with herself; captious, too, a new whim every minute, and a new man or woman required to wait on every whim.

Her manager passed his whole day at the theatre, and was to be found in one of two states—either a state of wild exultation, when his star happened for five minutes to attend to her legitimate business on the stage; or a state of utter exhaustion when his star, for five hours on a stretch, would with her freaks and temper. render the stage a pandemonium.

Sara quarrelled with everybody, and everybody submitted to be snubbed by her—all but one stage carpenter, a burly fellow, who told Sara one morning to go to—a place even warmer than she was then making the stage. Sara had a wholesome respect for stage carpenters ever after.

As for Sara's American agent, that most unhappy being never knew what it was to sit down; life was to him one leap, to breathe was to fly. His whole existence was passed rushing from theatre to hotel, from hotel to theatre; and his legs and coat tails were always *parallel* with the sidewalk.

SARA AND HER LEADING MEN.

At each rehearsal there was to be seen *two* "leading men," one ready to take the other's place at a moment's notice, if the first chanced to displease the whimsical Sara, or if she chanced to kill him, by inducing a fit of apoplexy or heart disease, from strain or worry.

Each leading man was appropriately dressed in funereal black, and wore crape around his hat, being in mourning alike for himself and for the other leading men, who had all brought their coffins with them "direct from Paris."

Before going on the stage, at each rehearsal, each "leading man, bade a touching, tender, and eternal farewell to all the rest,

partook of a double dose of absinthe, and then strode onward to Skeleton Sara, and to torment.

A few hours generally finished him—and the rehearsal together. But if not; if *he* was finished first then his "double" was in readiness for the sacrifice.

SARA WANTS HER TALMADGE.

One morning at rehearsal the American manager was sent for in great haste. Sara had conceived a new idea, and rehearsal was suspended till she had communicated it.

"Ah, monsieur le manager," cried Sara, "I want you to send for me to ze city near here—ze city zey call Brookline or Brooklyn—ze city zey have been building a bridge, to for ze last hundred years."

"Yes, that *is* Brooklyn," said the American manager (sotto voce.)

"I want you to send for me to ze Brooklyn," continued Sara, "and to get for me a man zey make a great fuss about over zare, a man by ze name, I tink, of Talmadge."

"Talmadge!" echoed the American manager, thinking his ears must have deceived him, "Surely you cannot mean the Rev. Dr. Talmage?"

"Oui, oui!" replied Sara, emphatically. "Zat is ze man—ze Reverend Doctaire Talmage—I want him brought over here at once; I want to rehearse with him; I want to have him to inspire me at rehearsals—to put new life into me—comprenez vous, monsieur?" "No, I do *not* comprehend," said the utterly bewildered manager; "why, the man is a minister."

"Oh, yes," said Sara, "I know he is what zey call a *clergyman*—more's ze pity, monsieur—he would make, mon dieu, he would make such a most capital *clown*. I want him brought here to zis very place, before my very eyes, to wriggle his legs and arms about, just as he does in ze Brooklyn Tabernacle every Sunday. He will amuse me—he will put new vigor into me—he will inspire me to make one as big fool of myself as he does; and then I will take ze New York by storm, just as he does ze Brooklyn."

It cost the American manager two hours and three quarters by the watch to talk Sara out of the notion of her Talmadge—and, when he was through, perspiration poured from his every pore.

HOW SARA WAS "WORKED UP" IN NEW YORK.

Meanwhile the management had been straining every point and spending every dollar, to keep Sara thoroughly before the public, through the press and printers ink. Sara's genius as an actress was eloquently commented upon by writers who had *never seen* her act at all. Her eccentricities were paraded and exaggerated, by penny-a-liners, who failed to see the spirit, the motif, that pervaded them. Sara was advertised, bill-posted, gutter-sniped, three-sheet-streamered, hand-billed, circulared, photographed, done in oil, crayoned. statuetted; the papers, the shop-windows, the dead-walls, were all full of Sara. Above all, her dry goods were brought prominently before a delighted and dress-worshipping world. She was thus shown beyond all peradventure to be an artist of surpassing—*Worth*.

THE DRY COODS DRAMA.

It was currently announced, and for that matter currently believed, that Sara had brought with her 2,700 dresses for the stage—about 300 for each of her nine piays—and 1,000 for personal wear, the whole cost of such a varied wardrobe exceeding 1,750,000 francs.

Among these dresses were one hundred toilets for "Adrienne Lecouvreur, with ivory satin trains and fronts of skirts of China blue drapery, garlands of roses, and Alencon lace, on pointed bodices. Another hundred or so of dresses of Lyons brocade silk, with embroidered cascades of flowers on the skirt, and bodices trimmed with 3,000 yards of Bruges lace. A hundred and fifty ball dresses, for "Camille," of white satin, with huge embroidered camelias on a ground of pearls, with court trains, ond new patent self-acting arrangements to hold up the dresses or let them down at will, on the shoulders and bust. One hundred "sensational toilets" for the "Sphynx," of black and jet

waists, with tremendous embroidered black ravens enfolded in the yellow satin skirts; and fifty deshabille toilets (to receive newspaper men in) composed *wholly* of valenciennes lace and pearls, the last fifty dresses being said to be, and we should judge truthfully, marvellously effective—on newspaper men.

It was gravely estimated by the "arithmetic man" of one of the papers that Sara's costumes, if sewed together, would constitute a bridge of dry goods spanning (or rather *skirting*) she Atlantic, and uniting Paris and New York—a magnificent idea which was rewarded by the appreciative management with a season ticket.

But the great "hit" of the management in the dry-goods-dramatic-advertising line was "Sara's Prize-Puzzle," which was really original in idea and effective in execution.

SKELETON SARA'S CHAMPION $500 PRIZE PUZZLE.

A parlor of the hotel was hired expressly for the purposes of this "puzzle." Into this parlor admission was to be had only by ticket, each ticket beieg obtainable for no less than a ten dollar bill. In one corner of this parlor stood a dressmaker's show-case, with six or seven of Sara's choicest dresses suspended or displayed therein; the show-case with its dresses being placed behind a curtain—which alternately concealed it and revealed it To all appearance the dresses in this show-case, when disclosed by the curtain, were merely dresses—dresses empty and unoccupied—dresses without a wearer. But this "appearance" was deceitful, as the holders of tickets were informed at once by the agent of the show, who was standing by the show-case, crying out, "Here you are, ladies and gentlemen; here you are; the great Skeleton Sara's Prize Puzzle. I am commissioned to offer $500 reward to the gentleman or lady who shall discover *which of those dresses Sara is in.* For she *is* in one of those very dresses at this very moment. Here you are, ladies and gentlemen; here you are." Etcetera-dacapo.

One minute by the watch was allowed to each set of ticket-holders to ascertaig the particular dress in which Sara was enclosed. But as Sara availed herself of the privilege of standing *sideways* in her "particular dress," and thereby became, to all

them rich, and most of them married men. Sara stood before her assembled adorers, in one of the fifty toilets previously alluded to as designed to impress newspaper men, (and noodles) and after a spirited competition for her charms, fell into the arms and purse of a hoary-headed old cripple with a million, who being paralytic, was obliged, as she tenderly murmured, looking at his elegantly-engraved bank-check, "I am zine—I am zine!" to embrace her by proxy.

THE NIGHT COMES.

At last the night came—the long-expected, long-talked of, long paid-for-in-advance night—which was to witness the debut, of Sara in America.

Every ticket-holder for the opening night was conscious of his own importance, and seemed to regard himself for the nonce as a public character; swallow tails and white chokers were in demand; so were librettos and French dictionaries; so were 18-button gloves, lorgnettes, hacks and librettos. So, above all, were ten dollar bills—for although Sara did not believe in matrimony everything connected with her had been reduced to a matter-o'money.

But not only the rich but the impecunious had caught the infection. A Dutch grocer, for example, who had scraped enough money to buy a seat in the family circle, had also prepared a huge basket, filled with provisions, his design being to remain in the theatre during the whole of Sara's engagement—hiding during the day behind the scenes as best he could, emerging only at night from his concealment, and meanwhile living on his lunch-basket. A young Irish lad conceived the idea of mounting the roof of the theatre, entering through the scuttle, then sliding down the chandeliers; while a bright American boy had invented a balloon, which conveniently attached to the ground by a rope, would permit its occupant to gaze upon Sara through a window. While rich and poor humanity were thus alike preparing and palpitating to behold her, Sara, the objective point of all eyes and pocket-books, drove to the theatre, and the moment she entered her dressing-room sent for her American agent and

him after her American manager. And the moment the latter personage appeared she asked him for some money. She made no bones about it—(though Heaven knows she had bones enough to spare)—but demanded an advance of 25,000 francs before she commenced to dress for her part. The manager was not surprised—(nothing that Sara could do could possibly surprise him by this time)—but he was justly annoyed and vexed. But Sara heeded not, but only said—"You no advance—me no act"—and sat still, and sucked her bones—we mean her fingers.

Of course, the manager yielded. The money was sent to her in gold pieces, in a bag, borne on the shoulders of the little, natty, oily blonde treasurer himself. For a while Sara was content—and dressed. Then, having rouged, and powdered, and painted and padded; having settled her wig, and stuffed her pillows, and located her bustle, and arranged her artificial calves, having completely adjusted all the complicated machinery of the toilet, and rendered herself indeed a work of "art," finding that she had still ten minutes to spare, she improved the time by calling her poodle on four legs after her poodle on two, and then calling the two-legged poodle after her agent, and then sending the agent after her manager, and then again asking her manager for more money—for another 25,000 francs—before she would go on the stage.

The poor manager, who if this sort of thing lasted much longer, would really be a poor man, expostulated in vain, threatened in vain, prayed in vain. He fell upon his knees and said his prayers backwards. He reminded Sara that he had a family in Hoboken, and besought her to leave him enough money to pay his fare across the ferry. But Sara was inexorable, and the manager surrendered. Again the little, natty, oily blonde Treasurer appeared with his bag of "gold," bright shining "gold," and humbly laid it at stern Sara's feet.

And while all this was transpiring in the theatre there raged the wildest excitement in the streets. The thoroughfares were choked, the cars and busses were blockaded, the house-windows were lined, the sidewalks were obstructed; timid people thought there was a fight, and country-people thought there was a fire; the small boys climbed the trees, and the police clubbed the

small boys. And when the rush commenced for the theatre doors there ensued a scene without a parallel. Gentlemen swore, fought, bled, caused other gentlemen's noses to bleed, while ladies tore each other's dresses, broke each other's fans, scratched each other's faces, and took away each other's characters.

Pour quoi? For what? That is precisely the question which was asked of a gentleman who with banged eyes, swelled lips, cut cheek, lost teeth, crumpled collar, torn coat, and besmeared boots, had just passed through the "fiery ordeal."

And his answer was suggestive.

"I have given a week's work to my doctor and my tailor to see"—What?

"A great actress?" Not necessarily.

"A good woman?" "Not by a large majority."

"What, then?"

Simply—"*The best advertised woman in the world!*

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